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DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH NURSING

IN CHARGE OF

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PUBLIC HEALTH NURSING LITERATURE.—Nearly every nurse doing public health work wonders why books on her particular specialty or handling her particular problems have not been published. There are a good many reasons for this, perhaps the best reason being that nurses do not write easily, and the next being that the nurses who know most about the work are too busy to write about it. However, we are slowly getting public health nursing literature, and the National Organization for Public Health Nursing has a good many helpful pamphlets on various subjects, which field nurses would do well to purchase. Mary S. Gardner's book on *Public Health Nursing* will help every field nurse who takes the trouble to read it, and the four books written by an old British district nurse, Mary Loan, entitled *The Queen's Poor*, *An Englishman's Castle*, *Neighbors and Friends*, and *The Common Growth*, can be secured at most public libraries if not purchased through good book stores, and they tell in interesting, simple form, about work among the poor and the unfortunate in British districts. Public health nursing problems are similar the world over and these four books will prove of special value to visiting nurses.

Less than a year ago, the National Association for the Study and Prevention of Tuberculosis published a pamphlet which should be in the hands of every tuberculosis visiting nurse. It is entitled *Tuberculosis Dispensary Method and Procedure*, by Elizabeth Crowell, the Executive Secretary of the New York Association of Tuberculosis Clinics. It is a pamphlet of over one hundred pages and contains instructions for furnishing and managing dispensaries, for home work, the training of nurses, the preparation and keeping of records, coöperation with public and private societies, in fact, it touches on nearly every subject which puzzles the nurse going into tuberculosis work for the first time. This pamphlet can be secured through the National Association for the Study and Prevention of Tuberculosis, and will prove valuable in many a tight place. The Chicago Tuberculosis Institute has recently published several pamphlets of lectures given under the auspices of the Theodore B. Sachs Study Class, which it furnishes free to nurses writing for them.

Possibly because tuberculosis is now an old story, possibly because we may always have it with us, people are beginning to think less of it as a distinct and separate problem, tuberculosis work is being shabbily done, and the study of tuberculosis by nurses and others is being neglected. Publications and protests to the contrary, the same amount of interest is not being taken in tuberculosis work that was being taken five years ago, but it will not be until nurses as well as physicians realize that tuberculosis is one of the greatest menaces of civilization and that nothing less than one's best efforts in work against it will be of much avail, that the tuberculosis work being done now in large cities and small towns, will be as good as it was a few years ago.

People who work constantly among the tuberculous do get discouraged. It is never pleasant to see one's old patients slipping away, in spite of one's best efforts, and perhaps tuberculosis workers would do better tuberculosis work if they were to go out into the general field once in five years and see what the problems and discouragements of other workers are. Nevertheless, in spite of the fact that it is a social disease, an economic problem, and a menace, tuberculosis is also a pathological condition and only people willing to put their very best work into the fight against it may hope to be useful in the big field of tuberculosis work.

We are worried now about conditions in France. How many workers will stop to realize that conditions in America may soon be or are now just as bad? Nurses who are inclined to think that tuberculosis is an easily-learned subject and that tuberculosis work is easily mastered had better study Trudeau's *Autobiography*. This, in addition to Miss Crowell's pamphlet on tuberculosis dispensaries, will help them get a fresh viewpoint as to the significance and importance of putting their very best efforts into their work. No one unwilling to give her best ought to hurt the work or herself by entering the tuberculosis field.

OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY.—The Illinois Society for Mental Hygiene, Elnora Thomson (Presbyterian Hospital), Director, has recently given two post-graduate courses to nurses, in occupational therapy. Susan Tracy has been giving a course to pupil nurses and patients in three or four large Chicago hospitals, two of which, the Michael Reese and Presbyterian, are continuing the work which she so ably started. The Chicago Visiting Nurse Association has assigned one of its staff nurses, Jessie Rumbaugh, (Chicago Baptist Hospital), to this work in the homes of its shut-in patients, both chronic and convalescent. Miss Rumbaugh has had the advantage of two courses, one with Miss Tracy and one with the Society for Mental Hygiene, and finds the contrast between the types of patients usually found in a

hospital class and in the district homes, very marked. The district patients are less interested, less quick to grasp, they are so accustomed to their confinement, their isolation and their loneliness that they do not take to new ideas easily; whereas the convalescent hospital patient is so bored by his unaccustomed inactivity that he is willing to try almost anything new. Nevertheless the Visting Nurse Association experiment is proving a success. Both young and old get interested after the second or third lesson and patients who have, until now, spent long, stupid hours alone, look forward eagerly to the next lesson. Thus far Miss Rumbaugh has been able to try rake knitting, stuffed animals and dolls, some simple basketry, plain knitting, and a little crochet work. In time she hopes to introduce a good many other types of handicraft work. The apathy with which some of the patients first greeted her attempts to teach them, shows how their isolation has eaten into their souls. The younger, brighter patients take hold much more quickly and are much more eager to learn, but even the older patients are responding in a satisfactory manner. One old man who has spent years in bed or in a special chair, after repeated efforts started a basket. When he had finished less than an inch of the 6 or 8 inch high piece of basketry, he said very sadly to the visiting nurse who saw him daily that he was sure he would never learn how to do the top. As it had taken him nearly a month to do the inch, we were not particularly worried about the top, but his wife told the nurse, aside, that nothing had given the old man more pleasure, in years, than this piece of basket work and the knowledge that his hands were not entirely useless.

Much of the work of the Illinois Society for Mental Hygiene and Miss Tracy's work makes the patients partially self-supporting. In district homes this will be almost impossible, for the patients have neither the intelligence nor the skill to make things that are marketable, but already we have discovered one patient whose poor stiffened, arthritic arms are better because of her rake knitting, and we believe that in time she will be able to make a small amount of pin money for herself by making caps and shawls. It may not be possible for all societies to put on a special nurse to start this work, but surely in this day of anxious volunteering, we ought to find a good many young people willing to go into the homes of our chronic patients or of patients who are facing long convalescence, to teach them simple handicraft work that will have a decided therapeutic value.

POST-GRADUATE WORK.—In spite of the fact that the Red Cross is calling off many public health nurses for military duty, a great many questions regarding post-graduate work are still coming in to the office of this Department. If nurses will read their JOURNALS care-

fully, they will find such courses advertised. Nurses who have been thinking of post graduate work but who feel that it will be a somewhat selfish waste of time while so many nurses are needed elsewhere, had better not change their plans for the coming year if they can possibly continue them. European conditions have proved to us that more highly trained workers are being called for every day. One can't help but get rusty in public health work if some form of post-graduate or outside study is not undertaken at least once in five years, and nurses ought to remember that a year is only twelve months and nearly everybody can be spared for study during that time. The longer courses at Teachers College, New York; Simmons College, Boston; and Western Reserve University, Cleveland, should receive careful attention, and the shorter courses offered by the Instructive District Nursing Association of Boston and the School of Civics in New York City, will prove in the future, as they have proved in the past, a very great benefit to the nurse able to take advantage of them.

RED CROSS SCHOLARSHIPS FOR PUBLIC HEALTH NURSING

An unprecedented response has come from the American people to the call for funds to meet the exigencies of war. Mindful of the immediate needs of the home country at this crisis, recent contributions have been made by several Red Cross Chapters and thoughtful individuals, making it possible to offer a number of scholarships to qualified nurses for an eight months' course in public health nursing. The New York County Red Cross Chapter has donated \$500, designating that it be used for two scholarships of \$250 for the course in public health nursing given by Columbia University, New York City. The Boston Metropolitan Chapter has donated two such scholarships for the Simmons College course in Boston.

Communications regarding the award of scholarships should be sent without delay to Director, Town and Country Nursing Service, American Red Cross, Washington, D. C.